



WDE Assessment Updates

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Scale Score Ranges on the ACT

As outlined in ESEA, Wyoming is required to establish performance levels on the ACT since it serves as the high school accountability test in reading, math, and science. For the 2013 test, WDE used equipercentile linking to establish score ranges on the traditional 1-36 ACT scale that resulted in similar performance to the 2012 PAWS.

A different process was used with the 2014 test in order to set higher expectations consistent with the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards in ELA and Math, paralleling the new, higher performance expectations on the 2014 PAWS. ACT research staff planned and facilitated a two day empirical standard-setting in August. Panelists included Wyoming teachers, counselors and administrators as well as higher education faculty. Recommendations from the panelists were accepted by the WDE, and per the advice of its Technical Advisory Committee, the Department then created a new Wyoming ACT scale, transforming the traditional ACT scale to a 3 digit number designed with 150 as the proficient cut across all content areas. The full set of cuts for basic, proficient and advanced is in the table below.

Wyoming ACT Scale Score Ranges, 2014

Math	Basic	122 - 149
	Proficient	150 - 169
	Advanced	171 +
Reading	Basic	129 - 149
	Proficient	150 - 163
	Advanced	164 +
Science	Basic	127 - 149
	Proficient	150 - 173
	Advanced	174 +

The individual student data file that will be posted to Fusion in early September will contain the traditional ACT scale scores as well as the new Wyoming ACT scale scores. It's important to note that there will be some students with the same traditional ACT scale score who have different Wyoming ACT scale scores. This is because the new Wyoming ACT scale takes into account item difficulty and item discrimination (the extent to which an item distinguishes between higher and lower performing students). Essentially, it takes into account the characteristics of the items each student correctly answered as well as the characteristics of the items the student missed. In this way, students get more credit for some items than others.

If you have questions about the ACT cut scores, please contact either Jessica Steinbrenner, Assessment Supervisor (777-8568) or Deb Lindsey, Assessment Division Director (777-8753).

NOW AVAILABLE: Information on the 2014 School Performance Rating System

WDE accountability personnel have updated the *Implementation Manual for the 2014 School Performance Ratings*. The manual explains the calculations used to derive the summary rating for each school in the state. The updated model for 2014 takes into account the alignment of the PAWS with the 2012 Wyoming Content and Performance Standards in English/language arts and Math which necessitated development of new score scales for the tests. This required a change to the grade 4-8 equity indicator since Adequate Growth Percentiles cannot be produced. There were no other changes to the elementary/middle grades model.

Compared to the 2013 pilot school performance rating methodology, there were several changes to the 2014 high school model. These changes include the following:

- ◆ New student performance levels were established on the ACT subject area tests with assistance from ACT to be aligned with college and career readiness.
- ◆ Graduation rate is more prominent with three ways for schools to meet or exceed targets
- ◆ Readiness now includes grade nine credits earned and a Hathaway sub-indicator in addition to graduation and tested readiness.
- ◆ Equity now includes a consolidated subgroup.

Please see the attached document for details. It will also be posted to the WDE Accountability webpage: <http://edu.wyoming.gov/educators/accountability/>

Online Registration of Wyoming Schools for the 2015 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) In Wyoming Begins This Week!

Instructions regarding online school registration for the 2015 NAEP were mailed this week to elementary and middle school principals.

Specifically principals are asked to review these materials, and then

- ◆ Designate a school coordinator to serve as the liaison for all NAEP activities in your school. The school coordinator should:
 - ◆ Be comfortable using a computer; beginning this year, all NAEP preparation activities will be completed online,
 - ◆ Have access/know how to obtain student information from your school or district's student information system (e.g., PowerSchool or Infinite Campus) such as birth dates, demographic information, and if any students have withdrawn;
 - ◆ Be familiar with how students participate on PAWS assessments

AND,

- ◆ Ensure that your designee registers your school for NAEP via the *MyNAEP* website at www.MyNAEP.com, using the 8-digit *MyNAEP* Registration ID number mailed to the school, and then complete the ***Providing School Information*** section of *MyNAEP* **on or before Monday, September 15th.**

A big THANK YOU! In advance to ALL principals for your diligence and support in registering your school(s) for this year's NAEP, and please contact Will Donkersgoed at William.donkersgoed@wyo.gov or 307-777-5133 with any 2015 NAEP questions.

PAWS Results - 2014 Questions and Answers

What is different about the 2014 PAWS?

- ⇒ In 2012, Wyoming adopted new, more rigorous content standards in English language arts and math. These standards, commonly known as the Common Core State Standards, specify what children are expected to know and do in each grade level, kindergarten through grade 12.
- ⇒ Since then, we have been transitioning our state test, the Proficiency Assessments for Wyoming Students (PAWS), to address the content in the new standards. Because the test has changed to better assess the more rigorous standards, WDE has to set new cut scores that define *how much* students need to know/do in order to earn scores in each of the performance levels (advanced, proficient, basic, and below basic) on the PAWS.

In what ways have the new standards affected the questions on the test?

- ⇒ In ELA, reading passages are sometimes paired together, and students must read both and compare and contrast the two passages. For example, they may be tasked with determining/analyzing the theme in both, or contrasting two arguments on a singular topic. Students also answer stand-alone language items on PAWS which require students to demonstrate their knowledge of academic vocabulary and figurative devices.
- ⇒ In math, students are expected to show they understand math concepts, not simply memorize and repeat formulas. For example, some questions require students to demonstrate that they know the next steps for solving a problem. And content that formerly had been tested in the upper grades is now being tested in earlier grades.

How are changes in cut scores made?

- ⇒ In the summer of 2014, WDE convened standard-setting panels to review test questions against the academic targets established in the standards and to make recommendations about what students need to know and be able to do at each grade level, 3-8, in order to earn a score in each of the performance levels.
- ⇒ The standard-setting panels were comprised of Wyoming educators with experience implementing the standards in their classrooms, and the process was facilitated by the state's test vendor, Educational Testing Services.

Who makes the final decisions about new cut scores?

- ⇒ Recommendations from the ELA and math panels were reviewed by staff in the Wyoming Department of Education, including the State Superintendent, who retains the authority to finalize and establish the cut scores.

Does the WDE have technical experts to help guide its decisions?

- ⇒ Yes. Like other state departments of education, WDE works with a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) comprised of national experts in educational assessment and measurement. The plan for standard-setting was reviewed and approved by both the WDE and its TAC in early 2014, and the process for determining cut scores will be reviewed by the TAC prior to adoption by the WDE in July, 2014.

PAWS Results - 2014 Questions and Answers Continued...

What changes, if any, can we expect to see in the test scores?

- ⇒ Since the 2012 content standards in English language arts and mathematics established higher expectations for students, the 2014 PAWS sets an entirely new baseline for student performance. Consistent with experiences of both Kentucky and New York, we have anticipated lower proficiency rates than we have seen in the past. This does not mean that students know less than 2013 and earlier, or that schools are doing a poor job educating their students – it's that the test itself reflects the much higher expectations we now have for Wyoming students.
- ⇒ Over the next few years, as students' knowledge and skills improve, we expect that proficiency rates will improve as well.

When will we get our 2014 results?

- ⇒ Because we are conducting standard-setting this summer for PAWS Reading and Math (grades 3-8) and the Student Assessment of Writing Skills-SAWS-(grades 5 and 7), data won't be available to districts until September.
- ⇒ During the first week of September, Individual Student Reports (ISRs) will be shipped to districts. One copy is intended for parents and the other copy is intended for the cumulative folder. In the middle of September, a data file with individual student results will be released in Fusion for district staff with the appropriate security rights. School and district reports will also be available. And, at the end of September, the WDE plans to issue its press release on PAWS performance. Watch the WDE Assessment Newsletter for specific dates.

What about AYP calculations and WAEA School Performance Reports (SPRs)?

- ⇒ In September, the statutorily required Professional Judgment Panel will re-evaluate school performance cuts for the SPRs in light of the changes to PAWS and resulting effects on overall school proficiency rates. Then, the WDE will run both AYP calculations and the SPRs. We anticipate these school accountability reports to be ready in October.

Can we expect any changes in PAWS science?

- ⇒ No. The state content standards in science have not changed, so the tested content hasn't shifted, either. We will continue to test the "old" science standards and use previously established performance cuts